

**Negative Cultural Resources Report  
for the Sweetwater Loop Trail Project  
San Diego County, California**

**UH3106**

**Lead Agency:**

County of San Diego  
DPW Environmental Services Unit  
Contact: Lorrie Bradley  
5469 Kearny Villa Road, Suite 305  
San Diego, CA 92123  
858-874-4055

**Preparers:**

Stacey C. Jordan, Ph.D., RPA  
Project Director



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William T. Eckhardt  
Project Archaeologist



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With contributions by  
Carol J. Serr  
Laboratory Director

ICF Jones and Stokes  
9775 Businesspark Avenue, Suite 200  
San Diego, CA 92131  
858-578-8964

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## **National Archaeological Data Base Information**

**Author(s):** Stacey C. Jordan, Ph.D., RPA, Project Director  
William T Eckhardt, Project Archaeologist  
Carol J. Serr, Laboratory Director

**Consulting Firm:** ICF Jones & Stokes, 9775 Businesspark Avenue, Suite 200 San Diego, California 92131 (858) 578-8964

**Report Date:** April 2008

**Report Title:** Negative Cultural Resources Report of Phase I Inventory, Survey, and Testing, for the Sweetwater Loop Trail Project, San Diego County, California

**Type of Study:** Phase I Inventory, Survey, and Testing

**New Sites:** CA-SDI-18,741

**Updated Sites:** None

**USGS Quadrangle:** National City 7.5'

**Acreage:** 1.18 Acres

**Jones & Stokes  
Project Number:** 00099.08

**County  
Project Number:** UH3106

**Keywords:** Marine dredged fill deposits, secondary-deposited undiagnostic historic trash

Gay:

RE: Sweetwater Loop Trail Project UH3106  
Cultural Resources – Negative Findings

Please be advised that a survey has been conducted on the above referenced project. It has been determined that there are no *in situ* cultural resources present on this property. The project has been plotted on a copy of the USGS 7.5 minute topographical map for your information (Attachment 1).

**County:** San Diego

**USGS 7.5' Quad:** National City, CA      Date: 1967 (photorevised 1975)  
Unsectioned portion      Township: 17 South      Range: 1 West

**Address:** No street address—see other locational data.

**City:** vicinity Sunnyside      **State:** California

**Thomas Brothers:** 1310 J1

**Other Locational Data:** Project area located along the southern boundary of the Bonita Golf Course, from Conduit Road on the east to Bonita Road on the west. The project area is located in the stream terrace and river wash deposits along the south bank of the Sweetwater River.

**Assessor Parcel Number(s):** 59005125, 59005121, 59009101, 59009102

**UTM:** 498495mE/3615261mN at southwest corner of project area using a Geo XT GPS receiver.

**Elevation:** East to west across the length of the project, approximately 110 to 95 feet above mean sea level (MSL). At the UTM point elevation is 97.55 feet MSL.

**Owner and Address:** Sweetwater Authority (APN 59005125); Crockett & Co. Inc., 5120 Robinwood Road #A22, Bonita, California 91902 (APN 59005121, 59009101); Ames Revocable Living Trust 04-08-02, 3260 Conduit Road, Bonita, California 91902 (APN 59009102).

**Survey Type:** Intensive pedestrian survey.

**Date of Survey:** 15 January and 15 February 2008 (survey and recheck); 19 March and 25-26 March 2008 (testing).

**Field Crew:** William T. Eckhardt, Michael M. DeGiovine (survey); William T. Eckhardt, Theodore G. Cooley (recheck); Andrea M. Craft, Koji Tsunoda, Clint Linton, Gabriel Kitchen Jr. (testing).

**Project Description:** The proposed project is the installation of *Type A* trail extending from Conduit Road west to Bonita Road, where it would connect to the existing trail along the north side of Bonita Road. *Type A* trails are approximately 8 to 10 feet in width with an additional 2-foot vegetation clearance on either side of the trail. This project area is a linear alignment approximately 0.65 miles in length and 14 to 16 feet in width, located in the stream terrace (Kennedy and Tan 1977) and river wash (USDA 1973) deposits along the south bank of the Sweetwater River.

**Methods:** The field survey was conducted using standard archaeological procedures and techniques. Continuous parallel transects (within an overlapping 5-meter wide coverage) were walked in an east-west direction. Survey conditions in the project area were fair, with dense vegetation limited to the margins of the survey area and to the western end of the project area. The entire proposed area of direct impact was intensively surveyed.

**Existing Conditions:** Within this proposed project area of direct impact, an existing trail currently runs parallel to the fence line of the Bonita Golf Course. Other current land uses or existing impacts within the project area are the storm water channel engineering of the southern bank of the Sweetwater River involving riprap and soils, and two buried pipelines in the western margin of the project area: a 36-inch waterline of the Sweetwater Authority and a 36-inch high pressure gas transmission line owned by SDG&E.

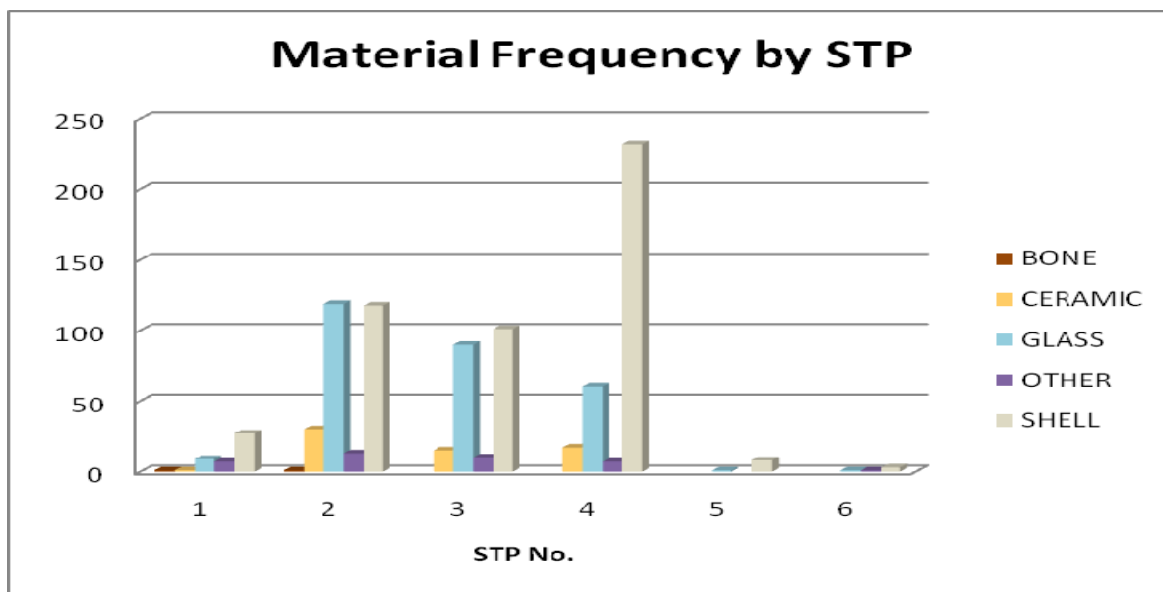
A significant ongoing land use exists in the western margin of the project area consisting of the active use of portions of the southern bank of the Sweetwater River for temporary storage and transfer of green waste, soils, and rock associated with Bonita Golf Course operations.

**Findings:** Marine shell, small fragments of historic refuse, and one lithic flake were observed on the surface near the western terminus of the proposed project during survey. Because of indications arising from record search information (see below), a concern existed that these cultural observations might constitute a site. Site record information was prepared (Attachment 2), and a subsurface test plan was developed (Attachment 3) and executed (Attachment 4).

Mapping, limited subsurface testing, and analysis of previous construction impacts reveal insufficient cultural information to warrant treatment of this material location as an archaeological resource (Attachment 5).

No diagnostic artifacts were documented for the surface of this site. Survey identified one lithic flake in the vicinity of STP 5: a noncortical porphyritic volcanic flake with subsequent naturally occurring damage to margin (e.g., trampling). Mapping of existing surface impacts and buried infrastructure identified extensive areas of intensive soil disturbance.

Six shovel test pits (STPs) were excavated to determine whether surface expressions of marine shell and fragmented historic refuse derived from subsurface deposit and, if so, what are the content, context, and integrity of such deposit. A graph of the material frequency from these excavations is shown below.



A summary of recovery by depth (Attachment 6) suggests the presence of a cultural deposit in STPs 1, 2, 3, and 4 to depths of up to 80 cm. Based on the presence of marine shell and historic glass and ceramics, this could be a cultural deposit. Analysis of the recovered materials, however, reveals an assemblage in very poor condition, with very few diagnostic indicators, no depositional context, and with little or no measurable integrity.

The historic refuse represented in the STP material is all extremely fragmented. Recognized are bottle fragments, ceramic plate, crock, sewer pipe, and brick fragments—none of sufficient size or integrity to provide indication of date or source. Other than very minimal markings on some bottle fragments there are no diagnostic elements. Glass bottles do appear to be manufactured by automated machine, but the fragmentary nature of the assemblage does not allow for in-depth analysis. In general this historic refuse may date to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps the 1930s to 1950s, based on limited available indications.

Limited amounts of metal are evident, including staples, copper and steel wire, and other unidentifiable ferrous elements. A slag of fused glass and metal is also evident, suggestive of burned refuse—although the sidewalls of STP excavations showed no signs of burn ash deposits or affected soils.

Fragments of plastic waste (labels, wrappers, and a plastic spoon) were also recovered from STP excavations. The plastic spoon was located in STP 2 at 40 to 50 cm and other plastic material was found at depths of 30 cm (STPs 1 and 3).

Analysis of marine shell recovered from the STPs reveals its occurrence with chunks of fossil conglomerate in four out of six STPs in which shell is present (see Attachment 6). A consideration of the marine shell taxa represented in this assemblage shows a wide variety of bivalves and gastropods (Attachment 7). Consideration of habitat for the species represented shows that they derive from exposed shore, embayment, and estuary environments. *Chione* and *Ostrea* are most numerous; among them, however, are valves too small (immature) to have resulted from food collection. A number of the clam valves still contain beach sand inside the hinges. Additionally, some pieces are visibly water worn totally smooth on their edges, indicating their tumbling in a tidal or surf environment. A number of small gastropods—*Crepidula*, *Crucibulum*, and *Cerithidea*, for example—probably do not represent a marine food resource in this context, due to their small size. Noticeably missing from the shell assemblage is mussel (*Mytilus*) and (the larger snail) *Tegula*, while other rocky shores species are present; also absent is *Donax*. These observations, coupled with ongoing soil storage at this location, suggest the marine shell and sand are aggregate from shore dredging used as fill for golf course maintenance and construction.

The limited integrity and context of the deposit in alluvial and river wash deposits, the intensive levels of existing and ongoing land use impacts, and the fragmented and undiagnostic character of the material assemblage argue against further consideration of this location as a bona fide cultural resource site. This evidence is interpreted as a secondary deposit.

A recommendation for archaeological monitoring of construction grubbing and initial grading activity is suggested by Native American participants in the test program (see below). Upon completion, an update record to CA-SDI-18,741 should be filed with South Coastal Information Center, San Diego State University.

**Records Search:** San Diego County Department of Public Works commissioned the South Coast Information Center to conduct a records search of the surrounding area using the California Historic Resources Inventory System (Attachment 8). Thirty-one previous studies have been conducted within a one-mile radius of the proposed project, and 10 sites and 1 isolated flake were identified.

Of particular interest to the current survey are records and reports of one isolated flake (Shultz, Whitehouse and Gross 1992a) and two loci (CA-SDI-12,738) of sparse scattered marine shell, lithic flakes, and fragmented glass located immediately west of the current project area, described (Shultz et al. 1992b; Carrico 1995a and b) as secondary deposits borne by seasonal flooding of the Sweetwater River (see Attachments 2 and 3).

**Native American Consultation:** San Diego County Department of Public Works requested a Sacred Lands File search by the Native American Heritage Commission: no Sacred Lands were identified within the project area (Attachment 9).

Survey surface indications of marine shell, one lithic flake, and highly fragmented historic refuse led to subsurface testing. Mr. Clint Linton of Santa Ysabel Band of Diegueño Indians was contracted through his company Red Tail Monitoring and Research, Inc. to provide Native American monitoring and archaeology services for this study. Either Mr. Linton or Mr. Gabriel Kitchen Jr. of Red Tail Monitoring & Research, Inc. was present to complete the subsurface testing. A letter verifying this participation and containing recommendations from Red Tail Monitoring & Research, Inc. is provided (Attachment 10).

Sincerely,



William T. Eckhardt  
ICF Jones & Stokes

Attachments:

- 1 Figure 1. Project Location Map
- 2 Site Declaration dated 5 February 2008
- 3 Revised Test Plan
- 4 Notice to Proceed
- 5 Figure 2. STP Testing & Existing Land Use
- 6 STP Recovery Summary by Depth
- 7 STP Recovered Marine Shell Taxa
- 8 Confirmation of Record Search
- 9 Native American Heritage Commission Response Letter
- 10 Red Tail Monitoring and Research Letter

**REFERENCES CITED**

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- 1995a *Archaeological Survey Report for the Bonita road Bridge Replacement Project, County of San Diego, California*. Unpublished report on file at South Coastal Information Center, San Diego State University.
- 1995b Archaeological Site Record Update CA-SDI-12,738. November 15, 1995. California Historical Resources Inventory System, South Coast Information Center, San Diego State University.

Kennedy, Michael P., and Siang S. Tan

- 1977 *Geology of National City, Imperial Beach, and Otay Mesa Quadrangles, Southern San Diego Metropolitan Area, California*. California Division of Mines and Geology, Sacramento.

Shultz, R.D., J.L.R. Whitehouse, and T.G. Gross

1992a Isolate Record P37-015168. June 4, 1992. California Historical Resources Inventory System, South Coast Information Center, San Diego State University.

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United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

1973 *Soil Survey of the San Diego Area, California*. USDA Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service in cooperation with the University of California Agricultural Experiment Station, USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Department of the Navy U.S. Marine Corps.